



### FAST FACTS:

- In the past 12 months, 48.7% of smokers that had seen their doctor were advised to quit smoking by their physician.
- Of smokers that had seen their doctor in the past 12 months, 10.2% were offered assistance other than a date to quit or a prescription.

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# Do Doctors Advise Their Smoker Patients to Quit Smoking?

Physicians can play a significant role in reducing tobacco use. They see approximately 70 percent of smokers each year, and are viewed by smokers as authoritative on tobacco and health issues. Brief advice to quit has been shown to significantly increase the percentage of smoker patients who successfully quit. Based on reports by smokers, the number of physicians who are advising smokers to quit has increased substantially (Hollis, 1999).

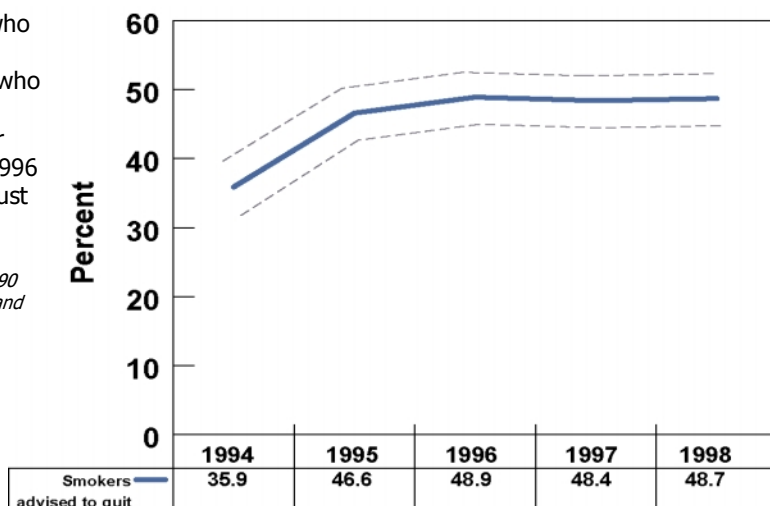
In a telephone interview survey of the California population, smokers were asked if they had seen a doctor in the previous 12 months. The smokers that had seen a doctor were asked about the advice given by their doctors regarding smoking. In 1998, 48.7 percent of them reported receiving any advice to quit smoking, 12 percent reported having their doctor suggest a quit date, and 10.2 percent reported having their doctor suggest that they receive assistance other than a date to quit or a prescription.

## Percent of smokers who report that they were advised to quit by their doctor in the last 12 months, 1994–1998

The percent of smokers who saw their doctor in the previous 12 months and who received advice to quit smoking from their doctor increased from 1994 to 1996 and has remained stable just below 49 percent.

*1994–1998 CATS weighted to 1990 California population with 4 race and 2 age groups.*

----- is 95% Confidence Limits

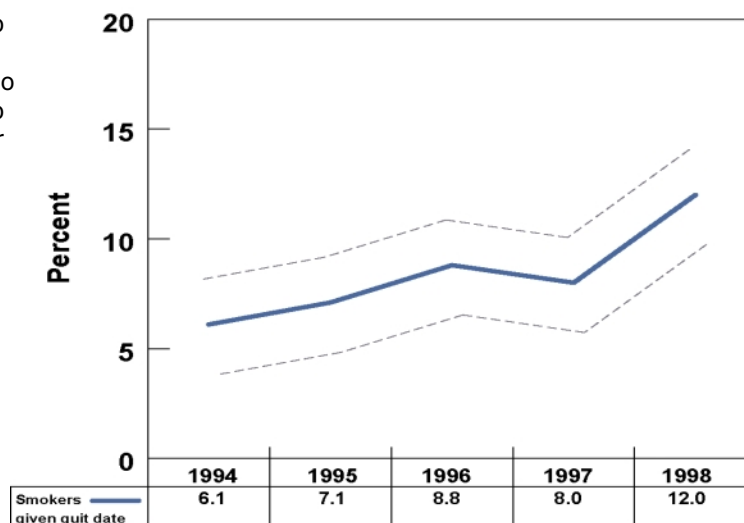


## Percent of smokers who report that they were suggested a date to quit by their doctor in the last 12 months, 1994–1998

The percent of smokers who saw their doctor in the previous 12 months and who received a suggested date to quit smoking by their doctor has almost doubled since 1994.

*1994–1998 CATS weighted to 1990 California population with 4 race and 2 age groups.*

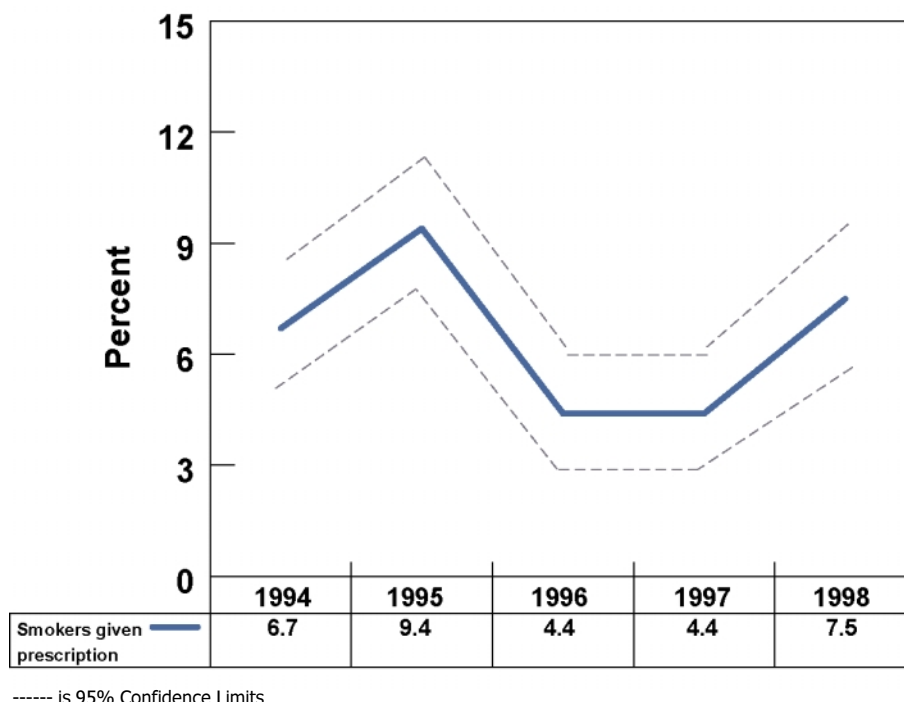
----- is 95% Confidence Limits



## Percent of smokers who report that they were given a prescription to assist quitting by their doctor in the last 12 months, 1994–1998

The percent of smokers who saw their doctor in the previous 12 months and who were given a prescription by their doctor to assist a quit attempt varied greatly. The drop observed in 1996 corresponds with nicotine patches becoming an over-the-counter drug.

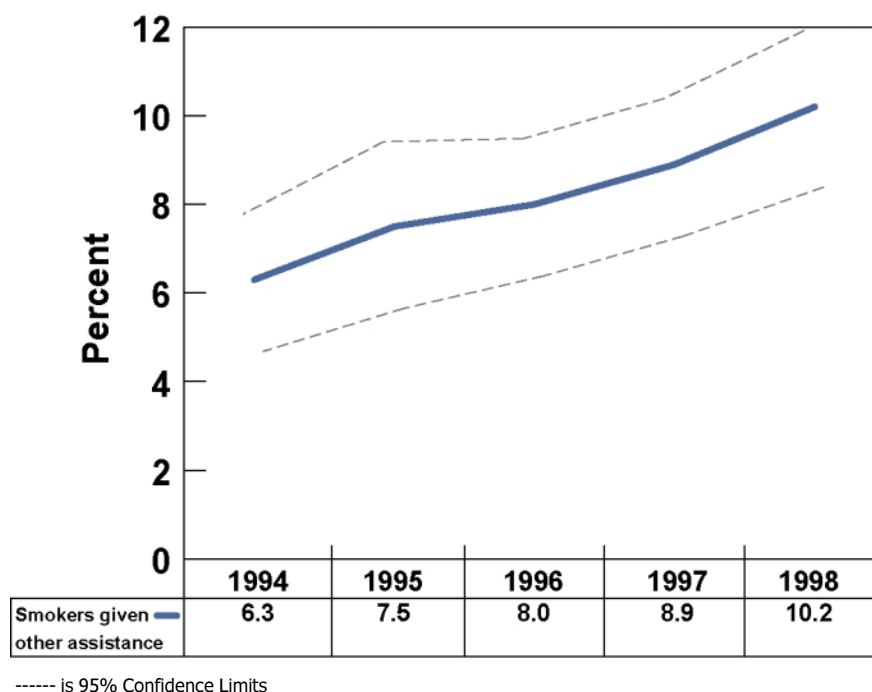
*1994–1998 CATS weighted to 1990 California population with 4 race and 2 age groups.*



## Percent of smokers who report that their doctor offered them assistance other than a date to quit or a prescription in the last 12 months, 1994–1998

The percent of smokers who saw their doctor in the previous 12 months and were referred by their doctor to receive assistance other than a prescription and a date to quit has steadily increased from 1994. This trend has been linear and has increased 62 percent from 1994 to 1998.

*1994–1998 CATS weighted to 1990 California population with 4 race and 2 age groups.*



## About the Survey

This information comes from a survey designed to collect data from individuals who are representative of the California population. The survey was performed and/or funded by the California Department of Health Services (CDHS).

The California Adult Tobacco Surveys (CATS) (1994–1998) are random telephone surveys conducted by the Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) Unit of the Cancer Surveillance Section of the CDHS. Each year over 4,000 adults are interviewed about their smoking behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs. The BRFSS/CATS data here has been weighted to the 1990 California population using gender, 4 race and 2 age groups. Beginning in 1996, the new adult smoking definition of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control has been used. This increased smoking prevalence by including more occasional smokers.

Funding for these surveys and other tobacco control efforts in California is provided by the Tobacco Control Section of the CDHS. The Tobacco Control Section has been established and is supported by the Tobacco Tax and Health Protection Act (Proposition 99), which was passed by California voters in November 1988.

## Reference

Hollis JF. 1999. Population impact of clinician efforts to reduce tobacco. In *Population based smoking cessation monograph* (in preparation).